To the Society of Inquiry. Theological Seminary
Princeton, New Jersey

My dear brethren

I duly received your favor of May 18th written by Mr T. S. Malcolm, and felt deeply interested in the information it communicated

Permit me once more at the return of the season to bid you God Speed in your endeavours to sustain the interest created by the Missionary Enterprise. I remember well the effects produced upon my own mind by communications addressed to a similar association, by those who had left us, to proclaim in distant lands the glorious gospel of the blessed God; and I entertain a hope that my annual communication may be found not altogether devoid of interest by those who are buckling on their armour, & preparing to go forth as Soldiers of the cross

I last year called your attention to the state of the Jews. The publication of Dr Grant's observations on the Nestorians — the united efforts of the Anglican Church and the King of Prussia to secure the settlement of an Anglican Bishop at Jerusalem — the abandonment of talmudical interpretation, by a numerous and influential body of Jews in London — and the arrangements now making by a number of their brethren at Berlin, to follow their example — all tend to keep an attention up fixed upon that interesting people, whatever opinion may be entertained respecting the several events alluded to. I therefore, without further apology, resume the subject of my last communication

From observation, and intercourse with christian Jews who have labored amongst their brethren, I am persuaded that the conversion of the Jews has been greatly hindered by the following circumstances

1 Both Jews and Christians have fostered the notion that a Jew must, necessarily, forego his nationality, on embracing Christianity.

The national pride — perhaps it would be more correct to say — the family pride — of the Jew is extreme. The convert may soon find that they only who are like Abraham — are the children of Abraham; but he who is a lineal descendant of that patriarch never can cease to be such by abandoning "vain conversation, received by tradi-

-tion from the fathers". The apostle of the gentiles, in common with the other apostles - I may add, in common with their Master - was a Christian Jew

2 Jews have seldom an opportunity of witnessing the effects of christianity in converting the soul; and they consequently form their opinion of christianity from the conduct of men who are only nominally Christians

They have never seen nor heard of the beauty of holiness manifest in Christians, and all that they have seen and heard tends to confirm their belief that ~~they~~ Christians are utterly devoid of true religion

A distorted history of our Saviour leads them to consider him an impostor; and from childhood they hear the term Christian employed as synonymous with blackguard. They need living epistles to teach them, "without the word" that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth"

3 They despise many who have labored among them because their rabbis are better versed in the Talmud than they

There is a remarkable conformity of character betwixt the Jews of the present time - and those who lived in the days of our Lord. They make the commandment of God of none effect by their traditions - and they seem to enjoy the discussion of such topics as are treated of in the Talmud

To the Jew it was commanded "When ye reap
the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap
the corners of thy field; — thou shalt leave them
for the poor of thy people" Upon this command
such questions as these are discussed How much
must be left if the field be four square? How much
if it be triangular? How much and in what
form if it be semi circular? How much - what
form - and where - if it be circular? In
listening to a Jew expatiating on such subjects
one is forcibly reminded of the saying of our Lord
"Woe unto you Scribes - and Pharisees, hypocrites!
for ye pay tithe of mint - and of anise - and
of cummin, and have omitted the weightier
matters of the law, judgment mercy & faith."

The first desire of an ambitious youth a-
mongst the Jews is to study the Talmud; to be
acquainted with several of the sciences is necessary
to success; and in general the student devotes him-
self to the work with the closest application

There appears to be amongst them a passion
for such studies: and the boys at school challenge
each other to a trial of skill in explaining the
Talmud. They go to the Rabbi and inform him
of their design; and he appoints them a passage
They seat themselves at the two extremities of the

room or in different apartments; and in a given time they each produce a written exposition of the passage presented. These are submitted to the Rabbi - and the contest is determined by his decision as their respective merits

It occasionally happens, when the children of wealthy Jews marry - that the father of the bridegroom challenges the father of the bride each to support the newly married pair and their family for twenty years. If the challenge be accepted contracts are executed - and the young man generally devotes himself to the study of the Talmud His application is frequently unbounded; - and if his [illegible] success be considerable his friends begin to talk of his achievements - and to say He'll be a Rabbi yet!

To attain this dignity in some parts it is necessary to go through a protracted course of severe study; it is rarely the case that this could be completed before the student has reached his thirtieth year. If it be attained at an earlier age - the hair of the student, prematurely gray testified to the magnitude of the mental effort

It does not appear to be ambition, or avarice, or the desire of usefulness - which alone prompts to the laborious and self denying life of a student of the Talmud; but the hope, alas, of having whereof they may glory before God." They have a zeal of God but not according to knowledge For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God"

It seems then to be most desirable that some at least of those who may devote themselves to labor amongst the Jews should be prepared to cope with them in the most subtile of their speculations; otherwise, contempt for the attainments of the Missionary may prevent an attentive consideration being given to the doctrines which he teaches in the name of Jesus

May the day soon dawn when it may be said of Israel He is holiness to the Lord! But how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? My brethren will none of you aspire to the honorable work of proclaiming amongst that people the unsearchable riches of Christ?

I remain My dear brethren
Affectionately Yours
J M C Brown
formerly of St Petersburg

Home Missionary Soc.y Rooms
11 Chatham Place London
1 January 1842

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To the Secretary
of Society of Inquiry
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